

There is no "natural" and universal instinct, by collision with which some things are recognized as obscene. We shall find that the things which we regard as obscene either were not, in other times and places, so regarded, any more than we so regard bared face and hands, or else that, from ancient usage, the exhibition was covered by a convention in protection of what is archaic or holy, or dramatic, or comical. In primitive times goblinism and magic covered especially the things which later became obscene. Facts were accepted with complete naivete. The fashion of thinking was extremely realistic. The Japanese now cannot understand how facts can be made shameful. They have very exact and authoritative conventions which every one must obey, but the conventions are practical and realistic. They serve purposes ; they do not create an unreal world of convention.¹ This is the extreme view of realism and nature. As has been shown above, however, so soon as objects were attached to the body for any purpose whatever, the conventional view that bodies so distinguished were alone right and beautiful was started, and all the rest of the convention of ornament and dress followed.

473. Obscene representations for magic. The Indians on the Shingu river, Brazil, wear little or no clothing.² They have full suits for dancing, but the tabooed organs are represented on the outside of these artificially and of exaggerated size. Evidently it was not the purpose of the dress to conceal organs the sight of which was tabooed.³ In Central Borneo, in order to drive off evil spirits, rough figures of human beings are cut in wood, the tabooed organs being exaggerated. Those organs are the real amulets which exorcise demons, for they are often

cut on the
timbers of the houses without the rest of the
figure. Then, by
further derivation, such representations became
purely ornamen-
tal on houses, weapons, etc.⁴ The Egyptians used
representations
of what were later tabooed organs as hieroglyphics,
and in their
conversation admitted no taboo. Pictures in the
tombs of the
Twentieth Dynasty (1180-1050 B.C.) show the lack
of any taboo,
and there are inscriptions by them which show
an absence of

¹ Hearn, *op. cit.*, 188-200.

³ *Berl. Mus.*, 1888, 199, 302.

² Cf. sec. 462.
I, 146.

⁴ Nieuwenhuis, *Centraal Borneo* ^